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Hammer and Sword on the Coinage of Viking York *c.*919–27

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Abstract: It is argued that the hammer first depicted on the last coin type of Regnald I (*c*.919–21) at York was a craftsman's tool symbolising urban prosperity, that the accompanying depiction of a bow and arrow symbolised rural wealth, that the sword of the subsequent sword St Peter type was the sword of St Peter intended as a symbol of the Christian rejection of violence, and that the hammer depicted in association with the sword on this type alludes to Isaiah 2.4 in order to reinforce this rejection of violence.

The purpose of this paper is to re-examine the significance of the hammer and sword as depicted on the coinage of Viking York *c*.919–27.[1] The coinage of this period divides into two clear phases: regal issues struck under King Regnald I *c*.919–21 and the anonymous St Peter pence with sword struck under his kinsman King Sihtric Caoch *c*.921–7. The hammer makes its first appearance on the last type struck under Regnald, but continues to enjoy prominence on all three main subtypes of the sword St Peter type. However, the main feature of this type, and that which gave its modern name to it, was the sword depicted on its obverse.

Hammer and Bow

Fig. 1. Hammer and Bow type of Regnald I. Recorded as PAS NLM-F304C3. TimeLine Auctions (London), (27 February 2016), lot 2216. © TimeLine Auctions.

The Viking king Regnald I took control of York sometime shortly after his victory at the battle of Corbridge in 918 and he seems to have retained possession of it until his death in 921.[2] He struck three successive types of penny there, the earliest

[1] In general on the coinage of Viking York, see e.g. C.E. Blunt, B.H.I.H. Stewart, and C.S.S. Lyon, *Coinage in Tenth-Century England from Edward the Elder to Edgar's Reform* [*CTCE*] (Oxford, 1989), pp. 97–107; M. Blackburn, 'The coinage of Scandinavian York', in R.A. Hall et al. (ed.), *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York*, Archaeology of York 8/4 (York, 2004), pp. 325–49; M.L. Gooch, *Money and Power in the Viking Kingdom of York, c.895–954*, doctoral dissertation submitted at Durham University in 2012 (available online); G. Williams, 'Coins and currency in Viking England, AD 865–954', in R. Naismith, M. Allen, and E. Screen (eds), *Early Medieval Monetary History: Studies in Memory of Mark Blackburn* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 13–38.

[2] C. Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to AD1014* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 93–5.

of which depicts a portrait surrounded by his name on the reverse, and a Karolus monogram surrounded by the name of York on the obverse. The second type shows a descending hand surrounded by his name on the reverse, and a Karolus monogram surrounded by the name of York again on the obverse. The third type has a hammer surrounded by his name on the reverse, and a drawn bow with arrow surrounded by the name of York on the obverse (Fig. 1).[3] It is this last type that is of most interest here.

The hammer on the reverse of the last type has traditionally been identified as the hammer of the Norse god Thor, and many modern commentators continue to repeat this identification.[4] However, some are beginning to question it. For example, Bo Jensen suggests that it may symbolise the craft of minting, and there is a precedent for such a self-referential design in the portrait penny of Louis the Pious (814–40) struck at Melle *c*.814–19 depicting two hammers, a punch, and an anvil on its reverse.[5] Lasse Sonne also argues against identifying the hammer as that of Thor on the basis that this would be inconsistent with the choice of the hand as the main device on the preceding coin type, since this hand was an imitation of the *manus dei* as depicted on a coin of Regnald's contemporary Edward the Elder (899–924), and this was an unambiguously Christian symbol, or so he claims.[6] This argument presumes first, that Regnald or his officials understood the significance of the hand on Edward's coin-type, namely that the Christian God was blessing the king and second, that they deliberately chose it because they were also Christian, the message in this case being that God was also blessing Regnald. Yet one could interpret the re-use of the *manus dei* quite differently. For example, a pagan Regnald may have deliberately, and quite provocatively, turned a motif of Christian propaganda back against Edward, effectively claiming to have the blessing of the Christian god in addition to the support of the traditional Norse gods. Alternatively, Regnald or his officials may have adopted a more utilitarian approach to design in this instance, imitating this design in the same way that they imitated the Karolus monogram on the obverse of the same type, choosing it simply because it was consistent with an existing coin type and so rendered the coin more acceptable among the general population. Finally, even if Regnald did recognise the significance of the *manus dei* on Edward's coinage and use it in the same way as a symbol of his Christian piety, this still does not exclude his subsequent use of a hammer as a symbol of Thor. For example, such inconsistency could be explained as the result of a confused syncretism between the various gods. Consequently, some commentators suggest

[3] In general, see C.E. Blunt and B.H.I.H. Stewart, 'The coinage of Regnald I of York and the Bossall hoard', *NC* 143 (1983), pp. 146–63. The last swordless St Peter subtype paired the inscription in the name of St Peter on one side with the Karolus monogram on the other, and because of the continuity in use of this monogram under Regnald, there has been some debate about whether Regnald struck this type also.

[4] See e.g. J. Rashleigh, 'Remarks on the coins of the Anglo-Saxon and Danish coins of the kings of Northumberland', *NC*[2] 9 (1869), pp. 54–105, at 79–82; D.H. Haigh, 'The coins of the Danish kings of Northumberland', *Archaelogia Aeliana* NS 7 (1876), pp. 21–77, at 67–9; *CTCE*, p. 105; Blackburn, 'The coinage of Scandinavian York', p. 334; Gooch, *Money and Power*, p. 78.

[5] B. Jensen, *Viking Age Amulets in Scandinavia and Western Europe* (BAR International Series 2169), Oxford, 2010), p. 65.

[6] L.C.A. Sonne, 'The Hammer of Regnald I of York', *NC* 173 (2013), pp. 201–4.

that the apparent hammer may also have doubled as a Tau cross.[7] Alternatively, and perhaps more plausibly, such inconsistencies could also be explained as a result of religious conversion, in particular, as the result of an open return to paganism by someone who had temporarily converted to Christianity out of a perceived political necessity.

This being said, there remains a lingering sense of inconsistency between the use of a *manus dei* on one type, and the apparent use of Thor's hammer on a later type, no matter how one tries to explain it. Furthermore, this sense of inconsistency is reinforced by the continued appearance of the same, or similar, hammer on the highly Christian sword St Peter type, the next series from York. Ideally, one would prefer to be able to resolve this issue by plausibly identifying the hammer as some form of secular or even Christian symbol rather than indulging in complex assumptions concerning syncretism or a succession of conversions from one faith to another. This is not to deny that syncretism did sometimes occur, but one must question when, where, and the degree to which such syncretism was acceptable to Christian authorities. In particular, one must distinguish between objects created for private consumption, or for consumption by a small group only, and objects such as coins created for public consumption. Christian authorities would probably have been least tolerant of the potential challenge posed by syncretism reflected on objects belonging to this latter group. Indeed, it may be more useful here to distinguish between true syncretism and the choice of a design which, whatever its original intended significance, was open to a variety of other interpretations, perhaps deliberately so. Of course, the individual viewer may place whatever interpretation he or she wishes on any symbol or work of art and no authority can prevent him or her from doing this. It is the assumption here that King Regnald, or his designer, meant to convey one main message by his choice of design on either obverse or reverse, whether or not all of those viewing his coins would have been equally capable of understanding the message.

Unfortunately, Sonne does not offer any new explanation of this hammer as an alternative to the traditional identification, but one does suggest itself. The key point here is that Regnald's coinage before his third type had been strongly imitative of that of Edward the Elder.[8] Hence the reverse of his first type indicated above had imitated the portrait type of Edward (N. 651),[9] and the reverse of his second type had imitated his hand type (N. 662). In the light of such imitation, one naturally turns to Edward's coinage also as the source for the hammer and the drawn bow with arrow as depicted on the last of Regnald's types. Perhaps the easiest mistake to make here would be to assume that Regnald's designs must copy the precise design of a coin struck by Edward for any imitation to have taken place. It may prove more helpful to consider imitation in terms of the continuity of an idea or theme rather than of a precise design.

[7] See e.g. Blackburn, 'The coinage of Scandinavian York', p. 334: 'a Thor's hammer (doubling as a Christian *Tau* cross?)'; Gooch, *Money and Power*, p. 79: 'ambiguous and able to be interpreted as a Tau cross'; Williams, 'Coins and currency', p. 33: 'representing Thor's hammer, although it may conceivably represent a tau cross'.

[8] For a recent summary of the coinage of Edward, see S. Lyon, 'The coinage of Edward the Elder', in N.J. Higham and D.H. Hill, *Edward the Elder, 899–924* (London, 2001), pp. 67–78.

[9] J.J. North, *English Hammered Coinage* 1 (London, 1994).

Fig. 2. Tower type penny of Edward the Elder: *SCBI* 68, no. 689. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Here one notes that the early phase of Edward's coinage from west Mercia included a type depicting what is usually described as a church tower, but is sometimes regarded as an elaborate reliquary or shrine in the form of a church tower (N. 666) (Fig. 2).[10] There is considerable variation in the depiction of this building from one moneyer to the next, but the accompanying legend never reveals the identity of the building, assuming that it is supposed to be the same building in each case. Despite the common identification of this building as a church tower, three factors argue against this. First, the simplest depictions of the building bear a striking resemblance to the camp-gate or city-wall as depicted on a common type of Constantinian *follis*.[11] It seems probable, therefore, that the earliest engraver had modelled his building upon the Constantinian type.[12] Second, it is noteworthy that none of the varied depictions of this building ever show it with a cross. Finally, there was a good model to hand if an engraver had wanted to know how to depict a church on the coinage. In his final year, the emperor Charlemagne (800–14) had introduced a new type whose reverse depicted a classical-style building, a triangular tympanum on an entablature supported by two pairs of columns set upon a podium approached by two steps, with a cross at the peak of the tympanum and a second larger cross between the columns. This remained the dominant reverse type on Carolingian coinage.[13] It is difficult to believe that an Anglo-Saxon engraver who had truly wanted to depict a church would not have been influenced by this type. Whatever the precise identity of the building, regardless of whether it depicts a reliquary in the form of a building rather than a building proper, the fact that this device resembles a building, a large and very complex building in most cases, would have encouraged the belief that it did in fact depict a real building. Hence this type could easily have been construed as some form of boast about urban prosperity within Edward's kingdom, that its towns contained magnificent buildings such as shown on this type. Indeed this may, in part at least, have been the intent behind this type. It is my suggestion, therefore, that the

[10] *CTCE*, pp. 36–8.

[11] This is the PROVIDENTIAE AVGG (or CAESS) type struck at most mints *c*.324–30. See e.g. *RIC* 7, London nos 293–98; Lyons nos 225–33; Trier nos 449–57, 461–64, 475–80, 504–7, 509–14. For depictions of very similar buildings, see *CTCE*, pl. 4, nos 14–15.

[12] The imitation of Roman coins finally stopped with the arrival of the Normans. See J.P.C. Kent, 'From Roman Britain to Saxon England', in R.H.M. Dolley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Coins: Historical Studies Presented to Sir Frank Stenton on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday* (London, 1961), pp. 1–22.

[13] On the identity of this apparent church, see M. Biddle, 'XPICTIANA RELIGIO and the tomb of Christ', in Naismith, Allen, and Screen, *Early Medieval Monetary History*, pp. 115–44.

hammer on Regnald's third type may have been intended to continue what one might describe as the building or construction theme of Edward's tower type. After all, a hammer was a common workman's tool used in carpentry, masonry and metal-work, all necessary in the construction and furnishing of any fine building. The intended message may have been that Viking York was prosperous and experiencing its own construction boom. As to why Regnald, or his officials, should have preferred to depict a hammer rather than some form of building as on Edward's type, the answer to this may lie partly in a desire to be innovative, and partly in the fact that it was simpler to engrave a hammer rather than a building with complex stonework and other ornamentation.

What does one then make of the drawn bow with arrow on the other side of the same type? Haigh claimed not to be able to explain this except 'by supposing it to be the symbol of the hunting god; the archer, Uller; the son of Thor's wife Sif, by a former husband'.[14] There is no need to invoke the divine here, as the bow was a relatively common weapon of war. Megan Gooch claims that 'In choosing the bow and arrow, the designers of this coin type were making a powerful statement about their military ability', and that Regnald's 'last coin type showed strong war-like imagery in order to proclaim his military strength'.[15] Gareth Williams appears to be puzzled by this bow, to the extent even of doubting whether it really is a bow. He refers to 'what appears to be a bow and arrow, unparalleled on any other coinage of the period, but possibly originally inspired by the stylised ships on some Carolingian coins of Dorestad and Quentovic, with the ship turned through ninety degrees so that the mast becomes the arrow in the new design'.[16] One cannot deny that there is a certain superficial similarity between the ship on the coins from Dorestad and Quentovic and the bow and arrow, but a closer comparison also reveals significant differences. For example, the coins from Dorestad normally depict multiple lines running from prow and stern to the mast, and these are difficult to reconcile with the single string of a bow. Most importantly, the fact that there was no immediate model for the hammer of Regnald's coin suggests that the die engraver was no longer slavishly imitating earlier types. Finally, it has been argued that, in certain Christian contexts, an archer may represent either the devil or a preacher, and the depiction of an archer on an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon penny has been interpreted in reference to preaching.[17] However, the use of the archer to symbolise Christian preaching was relatively unusual, and there is little to support such a religious interpretation here except possibly the small cross within the surrounding legend, but even this is not always present.[18]

[14] Haigh, 'The coins of the Danish kings', p. 69.

[15] Gooch, *Money and Power*, pp. 77, 79.

[16] Williams, 'Coins and currency', p. 33.

[17] A. Gannon, *The Iconography of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage: Sixth to Eighth Centuries* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 105–6.

[18] See Blunt and Stewart, 'The coinage of Regnald I', p. 149, no. 22.

Fig. 3. Floral type penny of Edward the Elder: *SCBI* 68, no. 682.

One should start any analysis of the significance of the bow and arrow on Regnald's last type by noting that the consistency in theme between reverse and obverse, both depicting hand tools, serves to confirm that the apparent bow and arrow were indeed intended as such. The second point to note is that the bow was not just a weapon of war, but a hunting tool also. The assumption that it was intended as a weapon of war in this case risks a simple stereotyping of the Vikings as nothing more than warrior-raiders, and needs to be questioned for this reason. It may just as easily symbolise hunting. Given the consistency displayed in the choice of the hammer on one side and the bow and arrow on the other the question arises, how deliberate was this? In the case of the hammer, it has already been suggested that it continues the building or construction theme of Edward's tower type, so the obvious question is whether the bow and arrow also serve to continue some other theme found on Edward's coinage. Another exceptional reverse type from west Mercia under Edward depicts a plant consisting of a single flower on a stem flanked by large leaves, all rising from what appears to be a bulb below a horizontal line (N. 658) (Fig. 3).[19] It is not clear what the exact significance of this plant is, but it is clearly suggestive of the countryside. It is my suggestion, therefore, that the bow and arrow responds to and continues this countryside theme where its emphasis is upon the fauna rather than the flora. Indeed, the floral type was so striking that it even inspired a coin of Pope John XI (931–5), so there is no reason to doubt that it could have attracted the same attention at York as Edward's other figurative types already had.[20]

In summary, while Regnald's third and last coin type at York was certainly innovative, it was not perhaps as quite as innovative or radical as has sometimes been assumed. It does not so much represent a complete abandonment of previous practice at the mint – of the imitation of existing coin types, primarily contemporary types of Edward the Elder – but an adaption. This last type continues the themes assumed to be intended by two of Edward's exceptional reverse types rather than attempting to copy the precise designs of these types. The result is a coin that seems to celebrate the town on one side and the countryside on the other, construction on one side, and hunting on the other. Together, the two sides celebrate the wealth of Regnald's kingdom of York, the fine buildings within the city of York proper and the rich game within the surrounding countryside.

[19] *CTCE*, p. 38, and pl. 5, nos 10–12. There are some other vegetative or floral types also, but they are rather less striking.

[20] C.E. Blunt, 'Four Italian coins imitating Anglo-Saxon types', *BNJ* 25 (1945), pp. 282–5.

The Sword of St Peter

Fig. 4. Sword St Peter type with cross reverse. Spink & Son (London), Auction 1609 (22 March 2016), lot 123. © Spink & Son Ltd, London.

Fig. 5. Sword St Peter type with hammer reverse. Spink & Son (London), Auction 1609 (22 March 2016), lot 125. © Spink & Son Ltd, London.

Fig. 6. Sword St Peter type with 'mallet' reverse. Spink & Son (London), Auction 1609 (22 March 2016), lot 124. © Spink & Son Ltd, London.

The sword St Peter type represents a restoration of the swordless St Peter type struck at York *c.*905–19.[21] This renewed type gets its name from the obverse depiction of a horizontal sword between two lines of legend SCIPE / TRIMO, to be expanded S(an)C(t)I PETRI MO(neta) 'The mint (or money) of St Peter'. This type can be divided into three main subtypes according to the reverse design, where one reverse depicts a cross with pellet in each quadrant as its main device (Fig. 4), another a solid hammer exactly as depicted on the last type of Regnald (Fig. 5), and a third a different style of hammer with voided head and handle (Fig. 6), where this is usually referred to as a 'mallet' in order to distinguish it from the smaller, solid hammer of the other type. It is important to note that all three subtypes depict a hammer or 'mallet', since the obverse of the sword St Peter with cross subtype also depicts a small 'mallet', the

[21] On the general chronology, see I. Stewart and S. Lyon, 'Chronology of the St. Peter coinage', *The Yorkshire Numismatist* 2 (1992), pp. 45–73. On the swordless type, see M. Gooch, 'The swordless St. Peter coinage of York, *c.*905–*c.*919', in Naismith, Allen, and Screen (eds), *Early Medieval Monetary History*, pp. 459–70.

voided handle of which acts as the letter I in PETRI. Unfortunately, the order of these subtypes is not clear. On the basis of the Thurcaston hoard, Blackburn supported earlier suggestions that the subtype with cross reverse may have been struck first but, on the basis of the Vale of York hoard, Williams suggests that it may have been struck last and this contradiction highlights the dangers of pushing the hoard evidence too far.[22]

Sihtric also struck types similar to each of these three subtypes within the sword St Peter type, where his name and title – SITR / ICREX – replace those of St Peter and the name of the moneyer replaces that of York on the reverse.[23] These were probably struck at a mint or mints in the Five Boroughs. A sword St Martin type was also struck at Lincoln in imitation of the sword St Peter type with cross reverse, so that a horizontal sword divides the legend SCIM / ARTI 'of St Martin' on one side and the name of 'Lincoln' surrounds an elaborate cross on the other.[24] The Vale of York hoard contained a unique sword type where the sword divides the apparent place-name RORIVA / CASTR on the obverse, and the legend OTARD MOT surrounds a cross on the reverse, suggesting that a moneyer named Otard struck this coin in a location perhaps identifiable as Rocester.[25] One noteworthy feature of this coin is that it includes a small hammer on its obverse in much the same manner as the sword St Peter type with cross reverse, except that the hammer appears separately between the letters S and T rather than also acting as a letter itself. So while the use of the sword probably originated with the sword St Peter type, it was quickly imitated on a variety of other types.

What, then, is the significance of the sword on this St Peter type? Two possibilities have found most favour. On the one hand, it could be identifiable as the so-called 'Sword of Carlus', a treasured possession of the Viking kings of Dublin during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and so used as a dynastic symbol by Sihtric. Haigh speculates that Charles the Bald (840–77) granted this sword to an ancestor of the ruling Viking dynasty in Dublin at Paris in 845.[26] It has been more plausibly suggested that the sword had probably belonged originally to Carlus Mac Conn, a King of Meath killed in Dublin in 960.[27] Whatever the case, there are two strong arguments against identifying the sword under discussion as the Sword of Carlus. First, it is inconsistent with the noticeable failure otherwise of the sword St Peter type to acknowledge a king in any way at all. Second, it is inconsistent with the fact

[22] Blackburn, 'The coinage of Scandinavian York', p. 335; G. Williams, 'Coinage and monetary circulation in the northern Danelaw in the 920s in the light of the Vale of York hoard', in T. Abramson (ed.), *Studies in Early Medieval Coinage* 2*: New Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 146–55, at 153

[23] M. Blackburn, 'Currency under the Vikings. Part 2: The two Scandinavian kingdoms of the Danelaw, *c*.895–954', *BNJ* 76 (2006), pp. 204–26, at 209–15.

[24] See I. Stewart, 'The St. Martin coins of Lincoln', *BNJ* 36 (1967), pp. 46–54; *CTCE*, pp. 106–7; Blackburn, 'Currency under the Vikings. Part 2', pp. 210–12.

[25] G. Williams, 'RORIVA CASTR: A new Danelaw mint of the 920s', in *Scripta varia numismatico Tuukka Talvio sexagenario dedicate. Suomen Numismaattisen Yhdistyksen julkaisuja*, 6 (2009), pp. 41–7.

[26] Haigh, 'The coins of the Danish kings', pp. 69–71.

[27] R. Ó Floinn, 'Innovation and conservatism in Irish metalwork of the Romanesque period', in C.E. Karkov, R.T. Farrell, and M. Ryan (eds), *The Insular Tradition* (Albany, 1997), pp. 259–81, at 262.

that Eric Bloodaxe (*c.*947–8, 952–4), a later claimant to the Viking kingship of York from another dynasty, re-used this type on one of his coins also (N. 550).[28]

Fig. 7. Swordless St Peter type with key of St Peter on lower obverse. Recorded as EMC 2002.0141. Spink & Son (London), Auction 1609 (22 March 2016), lot 122. © Spink & Son Ltd, London.

On the other hand, the sword on this coin could be identified as a symbol of St Peter used in reference to the gospel account of how he cut off an ear of a servant of the High Priest with a sword when the Jewish officials had come to arrest Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.[29] Haigh specifically rejects the idea that this sword could be a symbol of St Peter because 'it occurs also on the coins of S. Martin, where the same explanation will not hold good'. This fundamentally misunderstands the nature of a symbol, the meaning of which can change according to its context. In association with the name of St Martin, therefore, the sword probably refers to St Martin's use of a sword when still a soldier to cut his cloak in two in order to give half to a freezing beggar, a key event in his life resulting in a vision of Christ and his subsequent baptism.[30] In association with the name of St Peter the sword can mean something very different. Gooch also rejects the idea that the sword of the sword St Peter type could be the sword of St Peter because, as she claims, 'the sword is not St Peter's main attribute; this is his keys'.[31] While this is true, it also misunderstands the nature of symbolism, according to which the symbol does not necessarily stand alone, but derives its meaning from its context. In this case, the facts both that the sword occurs between two lines spelling out the name of St Peter, and that St Peter used a sword in one of the most famous incidents of his life, should combine to place the identity of the sword as his beyond any reasonable doubt. To this one may add that the casual viewer of the sword St Peter type may have been primed to expect some form of symbol in reference to St Peter by the fact that several varieties of the swordless St Peter type had already depicted a key in association with his name (Fig. 7).[32]

One needs next to explain the association of the sword of St Peter with a hammer or 'mallet', whether this is a small 'mallet' on the same side of the coin or a larger

[28] As Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland*, p. 120 states: 'It seems strange that an outsider-king would use images which could provoke memories of a rival dynasty's claims to his position.'

[29] Matthew 26.50; Mark 14.47; Luke 22.49–50; John 18.10. Only the last specifically identifies the assailant as St Peter.

[30] Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 3. Stewart, 'The St. Martin coins', p. 47, n. 2, reports that Dolley had already made this connection.

[31] Gooch, *Money and Power*, p. 82.

[32] See e.g. *CETC*, pl. 26, no. 10; *SCBI* 21 – Yorkshire: 45. The keys refer to Christ's grant of authority to Peter, and his successors, as described at Matthew 16.19.

device on the opposite side of the coin. In the assumption that the hammer is a symbol of Thor, Williams claims that 'as Thor was the defender of the Norse gods, so St Peter was the defender of Christ', arguing that there is an attempt to assimilate the two.[33] Apart from anything else this misrepresents the import of the gospel passages describing how St Peter cut off the ear of the servant of the High Priest, since Christ then makes it very clear that he did not in fact need St Peter to defend him in this manner. Indeed, the message of this story is essentially pacifist, rejecting the use of the sword. Hence the evangelist Matthew reports that Jesus rebuked Peter for his attempted defence of him:

> 'Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place: For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword.'[34]

In this way, by placing the sword of St Peter on the coin rather than his keys, the authority responsible for this type proclaims a need for peace, effectively declaring that violence will only beget more violence, and that this cycle needs to be broken. This was a brave message, and one wonders how it was related to the wider strategy that saw Sihtric meet King Æthelstan at Tamworth on 30 January 925 and marry Æthelstan's sister.[35]

If the real message of the sword was peace, ironic though this may now seem, the suspicion must be that the message of the hammer somehow complemented or reinforced this message. One is reminded here of the famous passage where the prophet Isaiah (2.4) proclaims that God will bring peace:

> 'And he shall judge the gentiles, and rebuke many peoples: and they shall turn their swords into plough-shares and their spears into sickles: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they be exercised any more to war.'[36]

The conversion of swords into plough-shares necessarily involves the hammer, as all such metal-work does, so the use of the hammer is implicit even if the Vulgate Latin text does not actually use the verb 'to hammer'.[37] It is my suggestion, therefore, that the association of the sword of St Peter with a hammer or 'mallet', whether this

[33] G. Williams, 'Kingship, Christianity, and coinage: monetary and political perspectives on silver economy in the Viking age', in J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (eds), *Silver Economy in the Viking Age* (Walnut Creek, 2007), pp. 177–214, at 198.

[34] Matthew 26.52: *Tunc ait illi Iesus: Converte gladium tuum in locum suum; omnes enim qui acceperint gladium gladio peribunt*. See R. Weber, *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, third ed. (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 1569, although I add punctuation for the sake of intelligibility. The English translation is from the Douai translation.

[35] See D. Whitelock and D.C. Douglas, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London, 1961), p. 68. This text leaves the sister anonymous, but she was being identified as Edith of Polesworth by the twelfth century. See A. Thacker, 'Dynastic monasteries and family cults: Edward the Elder's sainted kindred', in Higham and Hill, *Edward the Elder*, pp. 248–63, at 257–8.

[36] *Et iudicabit gentes et arguet populous multos; et conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres et lanceas suas in falces. Non levabit gens contra gentem gladium, nec exercebitur ultra ad proelium.* See Weber, *Biblia sacra*, p. 1098.

[37] The verb *conflo* means 'I melt, melt down'. See P.G.W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, second ed. (Oxford, 2012), p. 441. However, the Greek text (Septuagint) uses the verb συγκόπτω 'I cut into pieces' or 'I thrash soundly'.

is a small 'mallet' on the same side of the coin or a larger device on the opposite side of the coin, represents an allusion to Isaiah 2.4 in reinforcement of the basic message of the sword of St Peter itself that God wished for peace rather than war. The original hammer of Regnald's final type has been cleverly set to new use, but a use that is entirely consistent with its original use on Regnald's coin where it had symbolised the craftsmanship, including metal-work, necessary for construction. In support of this interpretation, one notes that the fact that the handle of the small 'mallet' on the obverse of the subtype (Fig. 4) with cross reverse doubles as the letter I in PETRI draws particular attention to this letter, and may have been intended in reference to the name of Isaiah (Latin *Isias*) in reinforcement of the interpretation just outlined.

Finally, if the sword of the sword St Peter type alludes to his use of a sword in a key incident in his life, and the sword of the St Martin type alludes to his rather different use of a sword in a key incident in his life, what did the sword mean when used by Sihtric on his regal coins in imitation of the sword St Peter type? In this case there can be no doubt that, surrounded by his name and title, the sword was intended to be understood as his sword. Hence this type does present him as a warrior-king. The continued depiction of the hammer in association with the sword, exactly as on the various sword St Peter subtypes, makes the point that he was also willing to make peace should the opportunity arise.

Conclusion

It is arguable that the significance of both the hammer and of the sword on the coinage of Viking York *c.*919–27 has been misunderstood. The hammer was never intended to be interpreted other than as a craftsman's tool. On the last type of Regnald, it served as a symbol of urban prosperity, but on the sword St Peter type it served to reinforce Jesus' rejection of Peter's attempted use of a sword to defend him by means of a clever added allusion to the conversion of swords into plough-shares as described at Isaiah 2.4. Regnald's last type emphasised economic prosperity, and contained no religious message whatsoever. In contrast, the sword St Peter type was unashamedly Christian in symbolism and message. Most importantly, the hammer was never intended as Thor's hammer, and any attempt to interpret it as such fails to pay due attention to the context of its use.